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# THE INTERCHANGE

JULY, 1987

## DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS' EMPLOYEES' NEWSLETTER

*They call it the "Persuader" and once jarred by the contraption — designed to simulate an eight mile per hour collision — people tend to remember seat belts save lives. Here Custer County High School student Denise Rickett takes a short-course in physics.*

Organizers of the "Health Fair" event in Miles City heaped praise on department employees **Mar-die Vaagen** and **Steve "Dunc" Stephenson**. One organizer wrote, "After dealing with so many people who are so busy watching their watches. . . and who kept saying 'It can't be done,' you two were sure a lift." (Photo courtesy of the Miles City Star)

**Beginning October 1**, safety belt use becomes mandatory in Montana. Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia now require their use in vehicles equipped with belts. Drivers won't be stopped just for failure to use safety belts, but once stopped, the fine for the so-called secondary offense is \$20. It's the driver's responsibility to see that everyone in the vehicle uses the belts — or pay the fine. Expect to see information on the new law in the coming months. Although it takes effect in October, fines won't start until January 1 to give Montanans a chance to get used to the new law. States with such laws have seen a drastic increase in seat belt use and decrease in injuries. 



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# Fish and Four-lane Share Montana Canyon

by Susan Colyer

The forested mountains, abundant wildlife populations and cold clear streams of Western Montana are great sources of pride for the people who live there. Many experience no greater joy than wading into a cold stream, fly rod in hand, anticipating the strike of a rainbow trout. Others just enjoy the simple beauty of the Montana outdoors.

Twenty years ago the Montana Department of Highways (MDOH) initiated plans to construct one of the state's final stretches of Interstate 15, linking the historic mining town of Butte with rural Boulder to the northeast. After extensive study MDOH chose a 35.6-mile corridor through some of Montana's most spectacular country. The road would cross rugged terrain and narrow canyons occupied by the very streams recreationists enjoyed so much.

The project's inevitable impact on two streams, the Boulder River and Bison Creek, became a major environmental issue, as many reaches of the streams had never felt man's encroachment. In several places they meandered across the corridor leaving little space for the new four-lane highway. The need for channel changes, dictated by topography, highway standards, safety and economy, was apparent. The final design called for 1.1 miles of new channel, most involving the Boulder River.



Fear arose that altering the streambed would cause native trout and whitefish populations to suffer. The fishery in the Boulder River was already somewhat diminished due to past channel changes, mining and other human activity. The proposed channel changes were likely to further degrade the biological and physical integrity of the stream.

"We were afraid sedimentation and erosion would result in the loss of fish spawning habitat, streambank cover and biological productivity," explains Paul Garrett, MDOH Biologist.

*(Continued on back page)*

*Susan Colyer is a native Montanan and a graduate of Montana State University in Engineering and Journalism. She's now working with the Department of Highways Construction program at Clearwater.*

*Susan became interested in the Bison Creek issue while assigned to the Construction Bureau during the Rotational-Oriental Program for Engineers. Her article will be published in the August 1987 issue of Civil Engineering magazine.*

## The Extra Mile

*It's not uncommon to hear reports of highway employees who go out of their way to help a stranded motorist or put extra effort into doing the job right. This column is meant to publicize the efforts of those who "go the extra mile" for the public we serve.*

The last interstate construction project — south of Dillon on I-15 — may yet be completed on schedule, thanks in part to the long hours and personal dedication of **Larry Sayre** of Consultant and Safety Design.

Unstable rock formations forced a halt in construction and required redesign of the Pipe Organ project this spring. It was feared the project could "drag on" for months or longer without a quick, but workable, solution.

Sayre "dug in" on the high priority project in all respects. As a result, the Construction Bureau was able to negotiate with the contractor to complete the project under the present contract. Completion is planned for 1988 and it appears now that the schedule can still be met.

Thanks, Larry, for going the extra mile on the last few miles of Montana's interstate system.

Experience and good relations with the people you work with can pay off — as was proven again recently in the Butte District.

District Utility Agent **Bob Fischer** recommended arrangements with the Montana Power Company that would eliminate the need for over a mile of three-phase powerline within the right-of-way on a primary system project.

A small "up-front" investment was approved that could save the department over \$25,000 — a "good stroke of business for everyone," as one administrator pointed out.

Good work, Bob.

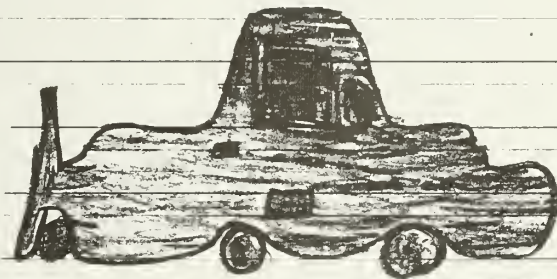
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1825 copies of this newsletter were produced at a cost of \$.08 each. Edited and Produced by Carolyn Chaussee and Dennis Unsworth, Information Unit. Phone 444-6200, Helena



Vehicles Day was a big event for grade schoolers in Miles City recently and the highway snowplow was obviously a big favorite. Miles City Maintenance Chief **Dick Tobel** sent these choice pieces of correspondence to share.

Thank you for bringing the snowplow. I like the snowplow because it has neat buttons.



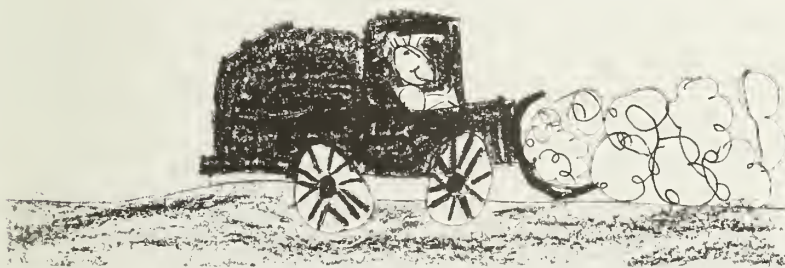
from Lacy

Dear, Highway Department, snowplow  
Thank you. What time do  
get up to do your job? Why do you  
run the snowplow, can't you do a  
different thing? What time do  
get done? Anyway I liked it  
From, Dustin Schneidt,  
Lincoln School

Dear sir,  
Thank you for coming to our Vehicles' Day.  
I liked your snowplow.  
I learned that in the winter time you  
go shovel the highways so parents won't  
get stuck.

Thank you,  
Carisa Stewart  
Jefferson School

Thank you for coming to vehicles day



Garfield  
Name:  
Jared  
Room:  
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# Along the Way

With this edition of the *Interchange* we initiate a new column — “Along The Way”. Its intent is to share some of the more interesting or informative material that results from information requests sent to the department.

## Scenic Routes

What are Montana’s scenic routes? Officially, there is only one — Anaconda to Drummond via the Pintlar Mountains and MT 1 (formerly US 10-A). It was established as an experiment, but the department’s position now is that many routes in Montana are scenic and no route will be designated over another.

## Not Ignored

U.S. 93 in the Eureka area is one of a number of narrow, two-lane primary highways sometimes dubbed “Montana’s worst road”. Although there really aren’t criteria for “worst road” status, most who have driven it would agree it’s a bad one. To make matters worse, spring break-up was especially bad this year and U.S. 93 had its share of potholes and broken shoulders, too.

Lincoln County residents sent Governor Schwinden a letter and videotape taken through a car windshield to underscore their plea that something be done to fix the road.

“I assure you U.S. 93 in the Eureka area is not being ignored” read the Governor’s reply. “The entire road segment from Stryker north to the Canadian border is currently in the design process at the Department of Highways.”

The letter went on to explain that road is in the “red road” category and will require full reconstruction. The work takes much longer than simpler projects such as overlays, but it’s underway and proceeding at a stepped-up pace due to funding available under Montana’s renewed Reconstruction Trust Fund (RTF) program.

Ninety-five percent of the road from Whitefish to the Port of Entry at Roosville will be improved under the RTF program — an ambitious undertaking by any measure.

## Most Dangerous?

“I drive Highway 93, Pray for Me” reads a popular bumper sticker. But a review of statistics prompted by a newspaper’s query shows the accident rate between Missoula and Polson is almost exactly the statewide average.

A great deal has been done on U.S. 93 in the last ten years — 24 projects in the Missoula-Polson section alone. The projects are the result of engineering analysis focused on accident “clusters” and involve illuminating intersections, installing left-turn bays and roadside delineators, flattening slopes and, in some cases, innovative signing.


Heavy traffic is one of the biggest problems on U.S. 93. The first four-lane section between Missoula and Polson was completed recently — DeSmet-Evaro. In the early 90’s, four-lane sections are planned for Pablo-Polson, Somers-Kalispell and Kalispell-Whitefish. Roughly \$70 million worth of major projects are planned on U.S. 93 over the next six years.

## How Much Montana?

James DesRosier of Butte caught a change in the new Montana Highway Map you probably missed. Under the mileage table, Montana’s area is listed as 145,392 square miles. DesRosier was quick to point out the correct figure is 147,138 square miles — a difference of nearly 2000 square miles.

What happened? Revised census figures for Montana list the new “area” number. It accounts for only land area, not total area. Fort Peck Lake, Flathead Lake, Lake Kookanusa and others make up the difference.

“The State of Montana is a great source of pride for Montanans living here as well as out of state,” DesRosier wrote. “An accurate representation of its area is a must, not only for reference sake but for historical value.”

As a result, the 1989 highway map — scheduled for release early in the State’s centennial year — will identify both the square miles of land and the total square miles. 

# Retirements

**Donald C. Kittelson** of Billings recently retired with over 40 years with the Department of Highways. Two other retirees had over 30 years with the Department. They are: **George Jovanovich**, Billings, 37 years, 2 months; and **Thomas A. Biglen**, Lewistown, 33 years, 1 month.

Retirees with less than 30 years included: **Gerald P. Tahija**, Missoula, 29 years, 11 months; **Richard L. Vimpany**, Helena, 29 years, 5 months; **Boyd L. Wolverton**, Great Falls, 29 years, 2 months; **Marvin L. Nelson**, Helena, 28 years, 5 months; **Arthur L. Tintinger**, Townsend, 27 years, 1 month; **Joseph E. Armstrong**, Helena, 26 years, 6 months; **James L. Phelps**, Livingston, 26 years, 2 months; **Walter J. Tresch**, Helena, 17 years, 5 months.

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## The Extra Mile (from page 2)

A new business recently received its first contract under the department’s Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program, but the “mountains of paperwork” for new firms weren’t so intimidating — thanks to **Debbie Johnke** of the Materials Bureau.

Johnke assisted with the necessary paperwork, introduced the firm to other department personnel and explained why the forms and paperwork were necessary.

The new business is off to a good start and thankful for the help Johnke provided.

Cold, heartless bureaucrats? Not according to this firm, at least. Thanks, Debbie, for putting the department’s best foot forward.

*Know someone who deserves thanks for public service beyond the call of duty? Send your ideas — with as much specific supporting information as possible — to the Information Unit in Helena. All items submitted will be considered for publication, although no commitment can be made that the item will be used.* 





*Not everyone takes the annual National Transportation Week run seriously, but there's no shortage of enthusiasm. While some runners charged off the starting line, a team from the Bridge Bureau (right in photo) was more interested in style. The event, held May 12 this year, is a traditional part of Transportation Week festivities nationwide. **Tim Cail** of Data Processing won the 10K (6.2 mile) event.*

## Mileposts

Service awards were presented recently to:

40 years: **Robert Ewing** and **Donald Kittelson**.

35 years: **Harold Baker**; **Richard Fransen**; **Duane Novakovich**; **Harry Strong** and **Homer Wheeler**.

30 years: **Teddy Deschamps**; **Dale Hecock**; **Paul Keniv**; **Keith McClain**; **Delbert Michels**; **Willard Neighbors**; **William Nelson**; **John Rife**; **John Walsh** and **Larry Williams**.

25 years: **Arnold Blair**; **Eugene Bruno**; **Douglas Fandrich**; **Gary Haven**; **James Jones**; **Jacob Liebelt**; **Dick Rogers**; **Norman Rognlie**; **Douglas Ruggles**; **Donald Taylor** and **Thomas West**.

20 years: **Boyd Bomar**; **Charles Chambers**; **Paul Green**; **Gene Hoffman**; **Eugene Redli**; **James Roan**; **Carl Swanson** and **Thomas Weiss**.

15 years: **Franklin Asbury**; **Lee Beatty**; **Lynn Bice**; **Mitchel Dereschuk**; **Horace Hudson**; **Donald Korman**; **William McChesney**; **William Pedula** and **Delton Schmitt**.

10 years: **Vernon Baldry**; **Eugene Butzlaff**; **Somxay Chareunsky**; **Dan Cleary**; **Benjamin Dean**; **Clinton Erickson**; **Robert Fisher**; **Clyde Gorder**; **Kim Hahn**; **Ronnie Haraseth**; **Michael Klette**; **William Lay**; **William Molina**; **Gary Nelson**; **Robert Pourroy**; **Richard Reynolds**; **Jayne Rogers**; **David Wall**; **Terry Whindom**; **Howard Williams** and **Ronald Winterrowd**.

5 years: **Michael Berg**; **Jacque Brett**; **Diane Burbank**; **David Cromwell**; **Linda Fohl**; **Jerry Francisco**; **Kathy Macaskill**; **Terry McDonald**; **Jack Peaslee**; **Mark Snow**; **Duane Snyder** and **Bill Williams**.

## New Employees

Welcome to our newest employees!  
 Billings: **Stanley Gress**; **Arthur Krantz, Jr.** Butte: **Bruce Knutson**. Glendive: **Joey Fischer**; **Klayton Rogge**. Helena: **Barbara Anderson**; **Carla Anderson**; **Dennis Dietrich**; **Arthur Jacobsen**; **Steven Vukelich**. Kalispell: **Leroy Lausen**. Wolf Point: **Arthur Mann**.

## News from Butte

Butte has been playing musical chairs again in our maintenance sections. **Art Tintinger**, Maintenance Superintendent — Helena and **Jim Tresch** — Helena Sectionman, both retired March 31st. We gave them a hearty send-off at a Legal Tender (Clancy) luncheon. **John Blacker** — MacDonald Pass — has taken Art's place, **Marvin Henderson** — Helena, is now in Jim's job, and **Lonnie White** has taken **John Blacker's** place at MacDonald Pass. We wish the retirees our best and the new men best of luck.

Bozeman reports the last segment of I-90 to be completed in the state, eleven miles east of Livingston, was opened to four-lane traffic on May 18th.

—Karen Ham



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**Bob Ewing** of the Construction Bureau received some good-natured ribbing at the June District Engineer's meeting. The occasion was the award of a 40 year service pin. Bob's peers took the opportunity to recall some distinguished early assignments, including duty at Hardin, Lodge Grass and Zortman. Bob joined the department in March, 1947 and is our longest-serving current employee.

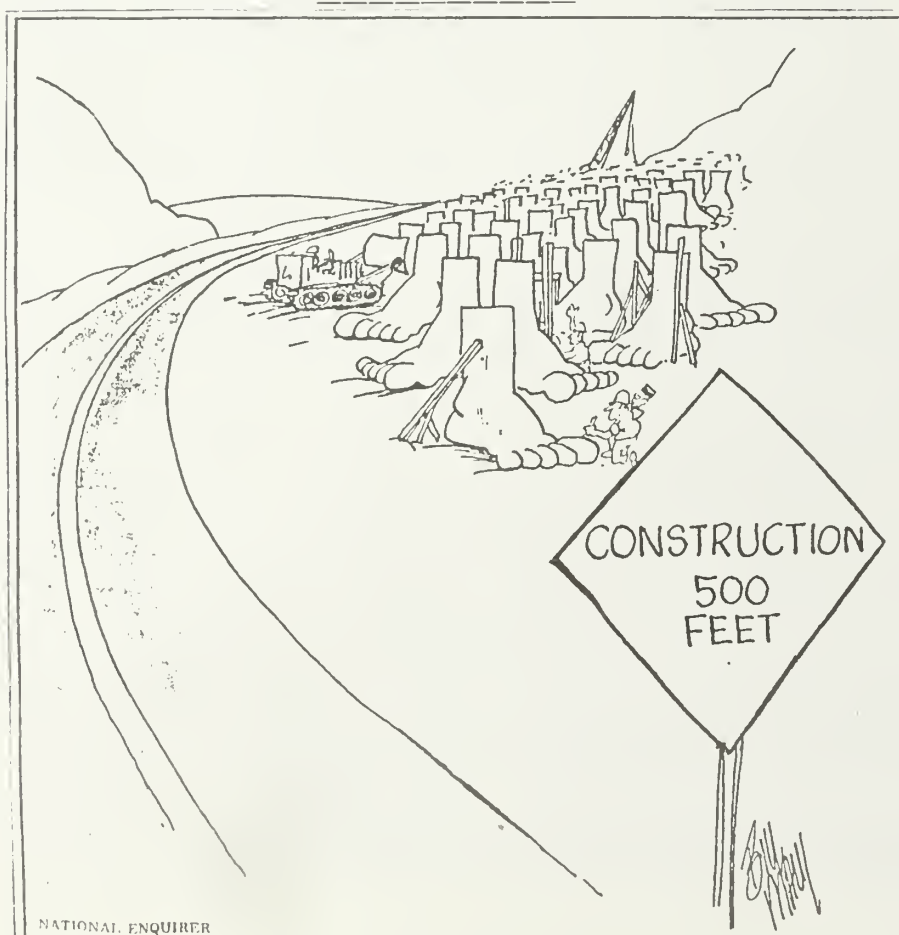


## Why Do You Go To Work?

**Why do you go to work?** Idaho Department of Transportation employees answered the question in a recent issue of their newsletter, the *Transporter*.

Some answers you might have expected, but Bill Fowler of Boise had some reasons you may not have considered. Why do you go to work? Bill said:

- 1) It's on the way to the bank.
- 2) To let my house air out.
- 3) The coffee is only 10¢.
- 4) To rest for the weekends.
- 5) Because the bathrooms have real toilet paper.



NATIONAL ENQUIRER


## Fish and Four-Lane (from page 2)

Timberline Reclamations, Inc., a Bozeman, Montana consultant, undertook the task of designing habitat and hydraulic structures. Their recommendations included a series of log and rock structures designed to support and promote vegetative growth, to create holding areas for fish and to prevent erosion. Many of the structures were incorporated into the channel change design, and subsequently were built.

Fish habitat was created in several unique forms. One was the shore-anchored habitat structure, a manmade protrusion into the stream on which overhanging vegetation could grow to provide fish cover. Once planted with native grasses and shrubs, the structures provided immediate habitat availability.

In one location workers split the channel to create an island. The land that forms the island already supports mature birch, alder and grasses which overhang the stream to provide prime fish habitat. Willow clumps planted along the river banks also offer cover.

Several types of erosion control structures were placed along the channel change stretches. Log jetties angle out into the stream and divert flow away from the banks in high velocity areas. Boulder outcrops protect the banks at sharp bends in the river and provide a natural and aesthetically pleasing rock wall effect. In addition, bank logs secured to the bank parallel to flow protect existing vegetation along straighter reaches of channel.

The habitat structures in Bison Creek and the Boulder River have been in place for two years. Although their effectiveness is still being evaluated, the streams' productivity is evident. Outdoorsmen are fishing the channel-changed stretches — and catching fish. 

## Transfers

Billings: **Scott Keller**, Construction. Helena: **James Ferguson**, Construction; **Sharon Kolman**, Materials; **Joseph Liuzza**, Materials; **Robert Newhouse**, Consultant and Safety Design. Lewistown: **Ronald Durfey**, Maintenance; **Ken Handford**, Maintenance.